

What is claimed is:

1. A method for controlling a rights expression specifying a manner of use of an item, said method comprising:

specifying by a provider of an item a rights expression indicating a manner of use of said item by a recipient of said item and a condition for use of said item by said recipient, said condition indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to control by a stakeholder;

associating said rights expression with said item; and

controlling by said stakeholder said use of said item by said recipient based on said condition in said rights expression.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

obtaining permission for said use of said item by a first repository from a second repository; and

controlling said second repository by said stakeholder to control said use of said item by said recipient.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

employing a digital ticket that references said rights expression;

specifying in said rights expression that presentment of said digital ticket is required for allowing said use of said item by said recipient; and

controlling said digital ticket by said stakeholder to control said use of said item by said recipient.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

specifying by said stakeholder in a rights expression a condition for use of said item by said recipient; and

associating said rights expression of said stakeholder with said item.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

indicating in said condition specified by said stakeholder that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by a stakeholder.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

specifying by a plurality of stakeholders in respective rights expressions respective conditions for use of said item by said recipient; and
associating said rights expressions of said stakeholders with said item.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

indicating in at least one of said respective conditions that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by one or more of said plurality of stakeholders.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

specifying by said provider in said rights expression a condition indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to respective conditions of a plurality of stakeholders.

9. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

specifying by said stakeholder in said rights expression that said condition for use of said item by said recipient is subject to control by another stakeholder.

10. The method of claim 8, further comprising:

specifying in said rights expression said conditions of said plurality of stakeholders indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by one or more of said plurality of stakeholders.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

employing a master license that at least one of references said rights expression and is referenced by said item, said master license including a latest version of said rights expression;

checking said master license for said latest version of said rights expression;
and

controlling said master license by said stakeholder to control said use of said item by said recipient.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said master license includes at least one rights expression indicating a manner of use of said item in accordance with applicable legislation, law or regulation.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein said master license is under the control of a regulatory or governmental unit.

14. The method of claim 11, further comprising:
accessing one or more pointers that references said master license to perform said checking step.

15. The method of claim 11, further comprising:
accessing one or more pointers that reference one or more pointers to said master license to perform said checking step.

16. The method of claim 14, further comprising:
changing said one or more of said pointers to reference another master license instead of said master license or in addition to said master license.

17. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
employing a central control repository that at least one of references said rights expression and is referenced by said item, said central control repository including a latest version of said rights expression;
checking said central control repository for said latest version of said rights expression; and
controlling said central control repository by said stakeholder to control said use of said item by said recipient.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said central control repository includes at least one rights expression indicating a manner of use of said item in accordance with applicable legislation, law or regulation.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein said central control repository is under the control of a regulatory or governmental unit.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein said rights expression includes a prohibited manner of use by said recipient of said item.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein said manner of use comprises a usage right.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein said use of said item includes access to said item.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein said recipient includes at least one of a user of said item, a distributor of said item and a consumer of said item.

24. The method of claim 1, wherein said item includes at least one of digital content, digital goods, digital services, non-digital content, non-digital goods and non-digital services.

25. A system for controlling a rights expression specifying manners of use of an item, said system comprising:

means for specifying by a provider of an item a rights expression indicating a manner of use of said item by a recipient of said item and a condition for use of said item by said recipient, said condition indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to control by a stakeholder;

means for associating said rights expression with said item; and

means for controlling by said stakeholder said use of said item by said recipient based on said condition in said rights expression.

26. The system of claim 25, further comprising:

means for obtaining permission for said use of said item by a first repository from a second repository; and

means for controlling said second repository by said stakeholder to control said use of said item by said recipient.

27. The system of claim 25, further comprising:

means for employing a digital ticket that references said rights expression;

means for specifying in said rights expression that presentment of said digital ticket is required for allowing said use of said item by said recipient; and

means for controlling said digital ticket by said stakeholder to control said use of said item by said recipient.

28. The system of claim 25, further comprising:

means for specifying by said stakeholder in a rights expression a condition for use of said item by said recipient; and

means for associating said rights expression of said stakeholder with said item.

29. The system of claim 28, further comprising:

means for indicating in said condition specified by said stakeholder that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by a stakeholder.

30. The system of claim 25, further comprising:

means for specifying by a plurality of stakeholders in respective rights expressions respective conditions for use of said item by said recipient; and

means for associating said rights expressions of said stakeholders with said item.

31. The system of claim 30, further comprising:

means for indicating in at least one of said respective conditions that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by one or more of said plurality of stakeholders.

32. The system of claim 25, further comprising:

means for specifying by said provider in said rights expression a condition indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to respective conditions of a plurality of stakeholders.

33. The system of claim 28, further comprising:

means for specifying by said stakeholder in said rights expression that said condition for use of said item by said recipient is subject to control by another stakeholder.

34. The system of claim 32, further comprising:

means for specifying in said rights expression said respective conditions of said plurality of stakeholders indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by one or more of said plurality of stakeholders.

35. The system of claim 25, further comprising:

means for employing a master license that at least one of references said rights expression and is referenced by said item, said master license including a latest version of said rights expression;

means for checking said master license for said latest version of said rights expression; and

means for controlling said master license by said stakeholder to control said use of said item by said recipient.

36. The system of claim 35, wherein said master license includes at least one rights expression indicating a manner of use of said item in accordance with applicable legislation, law or regulation.

37. The system of claim 35, wherein said master license is under the control of a regulatory or governmental unit.

38. The system of claim 35, further comprising:
means for accessing one or more pointers that references said master license to perform said checking.

39. The system of claim 35, further comprising:
means for accessing one or more pointers that reference one or more pointers to said master license to perform said checking.

40. The system of claim 38, further comprising:
changing said one or more of said pointers to reference another master license instead of said master license or in addition to said master license.

41. The system of claim 25, further comprising:
means for employing a central control repository that at least one of references said rights expression and is referenced by said item, said central control repository including a latest version of said rights expression;
means for checking said central control repository for said latest version of said rights expression; and
means for controlling said central control repository by said stakeholder to control said use of said item by said recipient.

42. The system of claim 41, wherein said central control repository includes at least one rights expression indicating a manner of use of said item in accordance with applicable legislation, law or regulation.

43. The system of claim 41, wherein said central control repository is under the control of a regulatory or governmental unit.

44. The system of claim 25, wherein said rights expression includes a prohibited manner of use by said recipient of said item.

45. The system of claim 25, wherein said manner of use comprises a usage right.

46. The system of claim 25, wherein said use of said item includes access to said item.

47. The system of claim 25, wherein said recipient includes at least one of a user of said item, a distributor of said item and a consumer of said item.

48. The system of claim 25, wherein said item includes at least one of digital content, digital goods, digital services, non-digital content, non-digital goods and non-digital services.

49. The system of claim 25, wherein said means for specifying, said means for associating and said means for controlling comprise devices of a computer system.

50. The system of claim 20, wherein said means for specifying, said means for associating and said means for controlling comprise computer readable instructions recorded on a computer readable medium.

51. A method for controlling a rights expression specifying a manner of use of an item, said method comprising:

specifying by a provider of an item a rights expression indicating a manner of use of said item by a recipient of said item and a condition for use of said item by said recipient, said condition indicating that said use by said recipient of said item is subject to control;

associating said rights expression with said item; and

controlling said use by said recipient of said item based on said condition in said rights expression.

52. The method of claim 51, further comprising:

obtaining permission for said use of said item by a first repository from a second repository; and

controlling said second repository by said provider to control said use of said item by said recipient.

53. The method of claim 51, further comprising:

employing a digital ticket that references said rights expression;

specifying in said rights expression that presentment of said digital ticket is required for allowing said use of said item by said recipient; and

controlling said digital ticket by said provider to control said use of said item by said recipient.

54. The method of claim 51, further comprising:

specifying by a stakeholder in a rights expression a condition for use of said item by said recipient; and

associating said rights expression of said stakeholder with said item.

55. The method of claim 54, further comprising:

indicating in said condition specified by said stakeholder that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by said stakeholder.

56. The method of claim 51, further comprising:

specifying by a plurality of stakeholders in respective rights expressions respective conditions for use of said item by said recipient; and

associating said rights expressions of said stakeholders with said item.

57. The method of claim 56, further comprising:

indicating in at least one of said respective conditions that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by one or more of said plurality of stakeholders.

58. The method of claim 51, further comprising:

specifying by said provider in said rights expression a condition indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to respective conditions of a plurality of stakeholders.

59. The method of claim 54, further comprising:

specifying by said stakeholder in said rights expression that said condition for use of said item by said recipient is subject to control by another stakeholder.

60. The method of claim 58, further comprising:

specifying in said rights expression said conditions of said plurality of stakeholders indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by one or more of said plurality of stakeholders.

61. The method of claim 51, further comprising:

employing a master license that at least one of references said rights expression and is referenced by said item, said master license including a latest version of said rights expression;

checking said master license for said latest version of said rights expression;
and

controlling said master license by said provider to control said use of said item by said recipient.

62. The method of claim 61, wherein said master license includes at least one rights expression indicating a manner of use of said item in accordance with applicable legislation, law or regulation.

63. The method of claim 61, wherein said master license is under the control of someone other than said provider.

64. The method of claim 61, wherein said master license is under the control of a regulatory or governmental unit.

65. The method of claim 61, further comprising:
accessing one or more pointers that references said master license to perform said checking step.

66. The method of claim 61, further comprising:
accessing one or more pointers that reference one or more pointers to said master license to perform said checking step.

67. The method of claim 65, further comprising:
changing said one or more of said pointers to reference another master license instead of said master license or in addition to said master license.

68. The method of claim 51, further comprising:
employing a central control repository that at least one of references said rights expression and is referenced by said item, said central control repository including a latest version of said rights expression;
checking said central control repository for said latest version of said rights expression; and
controlling said central control repository by said provider to control said use of said item by said recipient.

69. The method of claim 68, wherein said central control repository includes at least one rights expression indicating a manner of use of said item in accordance with applicable legislation, law or regulation.

70. The method of claim 68, wherein said central control repository is under the control of someone other than said provider.

71. The method of claim 68, wherein said central control repository is under the control of a regulatory or governmental unit.

72. The method of claim 51, wherein said rights expression includes a prohibited manner of use by said recipient of said item.

73. The method of claim 51, wherein said manner of use comprises a usage right.

74. The method of claim 51, wherein said use of said item includes access to said item.

75. The method of claim 51, wherein said recipient includes at least one of a user of said item, a distributor of said item and a consumer of said item.

76. The method of claim 51, wherein said condition specifies that said control can be exercised by someone other than said provider.

77. The method of claim 51, wherein said condition specifies that said control shall be exercised by someone other than said provider and said control shall not be exercised by said provider.

78. The method of claim 76, wherein said control is exercised by a regulatory or governmental unit.

79. The method of claim 51, further comprising:
indicating in said condition specified by said provider that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by said provider.

80. The method of claim 51, further comprising:
specifying by a plurality of said providers in respective rights expressions respective conditions for use of said item by said recipient; and

associating said rights expressions of said providers with said item.

81. The method of claim 80, further comprising:

indicating in at least one of said respective conditions that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by one or more of said plurality of said providers.

82. The method of claim 51, further comprising:

specifying by said provider in said rights expression a condition indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to respective conditions of a plurality of providers.

83. The method of claim 51, further comprising:

specifying by said provider in said rights expression that said condition for use of said item by said recipient is subject to control by another provider.

84. The method of claim 82, further comprising:

specifying in said rights expression said conditions of said plurality of providers indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by one or more of said plurality of providers.

85. The method of claim 51, wherein said item includes at least one of digital content, digital goods, digital services, non-digital content, non-digital goods and non-digital services.

86. A system for controlling a rights expression specifying manners of use of an item, said system comprising:

means for specifying by a provider of an item a rights expression indicating a manner of use of said item by a recipient of said item and a condition for use of said item by said recipient, said condition indicating that said use by said recipient of said item is subject to control;

means for associating said rights expression with said item; and

means for controlling said use by said recipient of said item based on said condition in said rights expression.

87. The system of claim 86, further comprising:

means for obtaining permission for said use of said item by a first repository from a second repository; and

means for controlling said second repository by said provider to control said use of said item by said recipient.

88. The system of claim 86, further comprising:

means for employing a digital ticket that references said rights expression;

means for specifying in said rights expression that presentment of said digital ticket is required for allowing said use of said item by said recipient; and

means for controlling said digital ticket by said provider to control said use of said item by said recipient.

89. The system of claim 86, further comprising:

means for specifying by a stakeholder in a rights expression a condition for use of said item by said recipient; and

means for associating said rights expression of said stakeholder with said item.

90. The system of claim 89, further comprising:

means for indicating in said condition specified by said stakeholder that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by said stakeholder.

91. The system of claim 86, further comprising:

means for specifying by a plurality of stakeholders in respective rights expressions respective conditions for use of said item by said recipient; and

means for associating said rights expressions of said stakeholders with said item.

92. The system of claim 91, further comprising:

means for indicating in at least one of said respective conditions that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by one or more of said plurality of stakeholders.

93. The system of claim 86, further comprising:

means for specifying by said provider in said rights expression a condition indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to respective conditions of a plurality of stakeholders.

94. The system of claim 89, further comprising:

means for specifying by said stakeholder in said rights expression that said condition for use of said item by said recipient is subject to control by another stakeholder.

95. The system of claim 93, further comprising:

means for specifying in said rights expression said conditions of said plurality of stakeholders indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by one or more of said plurality of stakeholders.

96. The system of claim 86, further comprising:

means for employing a master license that at least one of references said rights expression and is referenced by said item, said master license including a latest version of said rights expression;

means for checking said master license for said latest version of said rights expression; and

means for controlling said master license by said provider to control said use of said item by said recipient.

97. The system of claim 96, wherein said master license includes at least one rights expression indicating a manner of use of said item in accordance with applicable legislation, law or regulation.

98. The system of claim 96, wherein said master license is under the control of someone other than said provider.

99. The system of claim 96, wherein said master license is under the control of a regulatory or governmental unit.

100. The system of claim 96, further comprising:
means for accessing one or more pointers that references said master license to perform said checking step.

101. The system of claim 96 further comprising:
means for accessing one or more pointers that reference one or more pointers to said master license to perform said checking step.

102. The system of claim 100, further comprising:
means for changing said one or more of said pointers to reference another master license instead of said master license or in addition to said master license.

103. The system of claim 86, further comprising:
means for employing a central control repository that at least one of references said rights expression and is referenced by said item, said central control repository including a latest version of said rights expression;
means for checking said central control repository for said latest version of said rights expression; and
means for controlling said central control repository by said provider to control said use of said item by said recipient.

104. The system of claim 103, wherein said central control repository includes at least one rights expression indicating a manner of use of said item in accordance with applicable legislation, law or regulation.

105. The system of claim 103, wherein said central control repository is under the control of someone other than said provider.

106. The system of claim 103, wherein said central control repository is under the control of a regulatory or governmental unit.

107. The system of claim 86, wherein said rights expression includes a prohibited manner of use by said recipient of said item.

108. The system of claim 86, wherein said manner of use comprises a usage right.

109. The system of claim 86, wherein said use of said item includes access to said item.

110. The system of claim 86, wherein said recipient includes at least one of a user of said item, a distributor of said item and a consumer of said item.

111. The system of claim 86, wherein said condition specifies that said control can be exercised by someone other than said provider.

112. The system of claim 86, wherein said condition specifies that said control shall be exercised by someone other than said provider and said control shall not be exercised by said provider.

113. The system of claim 111, wherein said control is exercised by a regulatory or governmental unit.

114. The system of claim 86, further comprising:
means for indicating in said condition specified by said provider that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by said provider.

115. The system of claim 86, further comprising:

means for specifying by a plurality of said providers in respective rights expressions respective conditions for use of said item by said recipient; and

means for associating said rights expressions of said providers with said item.

116. The system of claim 115, further comprising:

means for indicating in at least one of said respective conditions that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by one or more of said plurality of said providers.

117. The system of claim 86, further comprising:

means for specifying by said provider in said rights expression a condition indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to respective conditions of a plurality of providers.

118. The system of claim 86, further comprising:

means for specifying by said provider in said rights expression that said condition for use of said item by said recipient is subject to control by another provider.

119. The system of claim 117, further comprising:

means for specifying in said rights expression said conditions of said plurality of providers indicating that said use of said item by said recipient is subject to authorization by one or more of said plurality of providers.

120. The system of claim 86, wherein said item includes at least one of digital content, digital goods, digital services, non-digital content, non-digital goods and non-digital services.

121. The system of claim 86, wherein said means for specifying, said means for associating and said means for controlling comprise devices of a computer system.

122. The system of claim 86, wherein said means for specifying, said means for associating and said means for controlling comprise computer readable instructions recorded on a computer readable medium.

123. A method for protecting a recipient of an item by permitting the recipient to use the item in a specified manner within a system for enforcing rights expressions that specify a manner of use of an item, said method comprising:

specifying a rights expression associated with an item, said rights expression indicating parameters of use of said item to which said a recipient is entitled;

specifying a stakeholder that is operative to insure that said recipient is permitted to use said item in accordance with said parameters of use;

enforcing said rights expression; and

controlling by said stakeholder said enforcing step to ensure that said use of said item is in accordance with said parameters of use.

124. The method of claim 123, wherein said controlling step comprises modifying said rights expression.

125. The method of claim 123, wherein said controlling step comprises assuming at least portions of said enforcing step by said stakeholder.

126. The method of claim 125, wherein said enforcing step comprises validating at least one of said rights expression and portions of said system for enforcing said rights expressions, and said controlling step comprises said stakeholder assuming said validating step.

127. The method of claim 124, wherein said controlling step comprises modifying said rights expression in accordance with legal rights of said recipient.

128. The method of claim 123, wherein said parameters of use include legal rights of said recipient.

129. The method of claim 123, wherein said parameters of use include legal rights of said recipient, and

said controlling step comprises modifying said rights expression in accordance with a change in said legal rights of said recipient.

130. The method of claim 129, wherein said parameters of use include legal rights of said recipient pursuant to applicable copyright statutes, and

said controlling step comprises modifying said rights expression in accordance with a change in said applicable copyright statutes.

131. The method of claim 129, wherein said parameters of use include legal rights of said recipient pursuant to applicable fair use laws, and

said controlling step comprises modifying said rights expression in accordance with a change in said applicable fair use laws.

132. The method of claim 129, wherein said parameters of use include legal rights of said recipient pursuant to applicable moral rights laws, and

said controlling step comprises modifying said rights expression in accordance with a change in said applicable moral rights laws.

133. The method of claim 129, wherein said parameters of use include legal rights of said recipient pursuant to applicable first sale laws, and

said controlling step comprises modifying said rights expression in accordance with a change in said applicable first sale laws.

134. A system for protecting a recipient of an item by permitting the recipient to use the item in a specified manner for enforcing rights expressions that specify a manner of use of an item, said system comprising:

means for specifying a rights expression associated with an item, said rights expression indicating parameters of use of said item to which said a recipient is entitled;

means for specifying a stakeholder that is operative to insure that said recipient is permitted to use said item in accordance with said parameters of use;

means for enforcing said rights expression; and

means for controlling by said stakeholder said means for enforcing to ensure that said use of said item is in accordance with said parameters of use.

135. The system of claim 134, wherein said means for controlling comprises means for modifying said rights expression.

136. The system of claim 135, wherein said means for controlling comprises means for assuming at least portions of said means for enforcing by said stakeholder.

137. The system of claim 136, wherein said means for enforcing comprises means for validating at least one of said rights expression and portions of said means for enforcing said rights expressions, and said means for controlling comprises means for assuming said means for validating by said stakeholder.

138. The system of claim 135, wherein said means for controlling comprises means for modifying said rights expression in accordance with legal rights of said recipient.

139. The system of claim 134, wherein said parameters of use include legal rights of said recipient.

140. The system of claim 134, wherein said parameters of use include legal rights of said recipient, and

said means for controlling comprises means for modifying said rights expression in accordance with a change in said legal rights of said recipient.

141. The system of claim 140, wherein said parameters of use include legal rights of said recipient pursuant to applicable copyright statutes, and

said means for controlling comprises means for modifying said rights expression in accordance with a change in said applicable copyright statutes.

142. The system of claim 140, wherein said parameters of use include legal rights of said recipient pursuant to applicable fair use laws, and

said means for controlling comprises means for modifying said rights expression in accordance with a change in said applicable fair use laws.

143. The system of claim 140, wherein said parameters of use include legal rights of said recipient pursuant to applicable moral rights laws, and

said means for controlling comprises means for modifying said rights expression in accordance with a change in said applicable moral rights laws.

144. The system of claim 140, wherein said parameters of use include legal rights of said recipient pursuant to applicable first sale laws, and

said means for controlling comprises means for modifying said rights expression in accordance with a change in said applicable first sale laws.

145. The system of claim 134, wherein said means for specifying said rights expression, said means for specifying said stakeholder, said means for enforcing, and said means for controlling comprise devices of a computer system.

146. The system of claim 134, wherein said means for specifying said rights expression, said means for specifying said stakeholder, said means for enforcing, and said means for controlling comprise computer readable instructions recorded on a computer readable medium.